



# MEDIA INFORMATION

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## **FOX SPORTS 1 RACE DIRECTOR 'SPEAKS DIRT'**

### **Vincent's Extensive Experience at Eldora Strengthens Coverage of Highly Anticipated NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES Race**

One of the most seasoned veterans at Eldora Speedway will be stuck in a truck going nowhere for the July 23 NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES race (live on FOX Sports 1 at 8:30 PM ET; coverage begins at 10:00 AM ET).

Indiana resident Roger Vincent, NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES race director for FOX Sports 1, has been to Eldora Speedway more than 20 times in the past 30 years, either as a fan or to direct television race coverage. For the second consecutive year, he directs the Truck Series race at Eldora from the FOX Sports 1 production truck outside the race track.

"Since the '80s, I have been attending races at Eldora as a fan with my father and directing USAC and World of Outlaw sprint car races and now Truck Series races," Vincent said. "It always was one of my favorite venues as a dirt-racing fan. I moved to the Indianapolis area in 1994, and now that the Truck Series no longer races at IRP, where I worked numerous races, Eldora is the highlight of the year for me on the Truck schedule."

Vincent, who lives about two hours from Eldora in Zionsville, Ind., has had dirt under his nails since he was a toddler. His father grew up in western Pennsylvania, home to several famous dirt tracks.

"My dad is a huge race fan and passed that passion on to me," said Vincent, raised in Denton, Texas. "Racing was his first love and he started taking me to dirt races before I can even remember. My first memories are of going to Devil's Bowl Speedway in Texas every Friday night to watch the sprint cars. All our vacations revolved around racing. Knoxville, Eldora, Williams Grove -- you name it and I've probably been there."

Vincent's first voyage to Eldora came when he was 10 years old.

“We drove up there in an old Dodge van,” Vincent recalled. “I was lying down in the back while my dad was driving, and he yelled, ‘We’re coming up on Rossburg!’ I sat up and we went through one stoplight, and he said, ‘That’s it.’ Then 10 minutes later, we were at the track.”

Vincent, who won an Emmy Award in 2000 for his directing work at the 2000 Olympic Games’ rowing competition, began working on ESPN’s USAC racing show, *Saturday Night Thunder*, in the early 1990s while taking radio and TV classes at California State University-Long Beach. After serving as Dave Despain’s stage manager in 1991, Vincent worked his way up through various production jobs and transferred to Indiana in 1994. His big break came in 1996 when he began directing *Saturday Night Thunder*, and nine years later, formed his own company, Thunder Images, which he still operates today.

Vincent considers directing last year’s inaugural NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES race on dirt, NASCAR’s first dirt race in more than 40 years, an honor not only because of the historical significance but because of what it represented from an industry perspective.

“Dirt racing isn’t where the spotlight or money is,” Vincent stated. “That’s why Eldora is so special to me. We get to take a real show with a real budget and shine a spotlight on a dirt track for the first time. Having a sufficient budget allowed us to shoot dirt racing the way it deserves to be shot. There always have been hard cameras shooting from afar instead of a robotic camera that can get in there and get the Trucks heading into the corner and the dirt flying. In the past, that was a part of dirt racing that was frustrating because we couldn’t show it all, but being able to do so last year was one of the proudest moments of my entire career.”

A lot of that budget went into the technology necessary to properly showcase the action on dirt.

“To my knowledge, when we went to Eldora last year, it was the first time any dirt track in the country had built cages for robotic cameras,” Vincent explained. “That always had been a problem. In the Prelude to the Dream, the robo cameras got knocked out twice in qualifying by a car getting sideways and hitting it. But Roger Slack and the folks at Eldora worked with us to get those cages built. That was a big part of the success of FOX’s coverage last year.”

While tremendous preparation went into the first Truck race at Eldora and hopes were high, Vincent still harbored doubts over how Trucks slinging dirt would translate to viewers at home.

“I was a little concerned it wouldn’t live up to the hype because Trucks are not designed to race on dirt,” Vincent reflected. “We were taking a heavy vehicle designed to drive more straight than sideways and throwing it on a red-clay surface, so I was apprehensive. The prospect was exciting but there was a lot of pressure, not just on the track and NASCAR, but on us to deliver a good show. At the end of the night, the excitement at the track translated to the folks at home, and everyone seemed thrilled.”

Vincent and Truck Series race producer Mark Smith, who also possesses an extensive television background in dirt-track racing, were the “go-to” guys within FOX Sports last year when Eldora planning was in its infancy.

“I speak dirt,” Vincent said. “Mark Smith and I spent a lot of time on the front end trying to get everyone up to speed to explain dirt racing in the simplest terms so viewers could understand. It was our job to be sure we came off like we knew what we were talking about, from the on-air team to the graphics team. It also was imperative to clearly explain to viewers the heat races, who was locked into the feature, who was in position to get locked in and so forth. It’s like

introducing the Daytona 500 qualifying procedure to someone who's not familiar with the mess it seems to be."

Other than trying to explain the nuances of dirt racing, Vincent says the biggest challenge of directing a dirt race revolves around the racing surface itself.

"The hardest thing is ensuring the track doesn't look dusty on television," Vincent said. "That doesn't make for good TV. Sometimes it's dusty but my job is to show the beauty of dirt racing with sideways driving and not have the viewer want to get his Swiffer out and dust off the TV. You can cut shots different ways and use various cameras to accomplish this. The roof cameras, with their long lenses, tend to produce the dustiest shots because they're compressing and zooming in. That's when we try to stay with the on-boards and some other shots. You get a cleaner shot shooting low because you're not shooting through as much dust."

Once the dust settled, the lifelong Eldora fan claims he loved his perch in the FOX Sports production truck regardless of whether its view paled in comparison to a spot in the grandstands.

"So much work had led up to that point that the payoff was being in the director's chair during the race," Vincent recalled. "We had the best of both worlds because we got to spend a lot of time there before the race. I got to eat one of Eldora's world-famous pizza burgers and soak in the flavor of the track but also buckle down and do my job."

--FOX SPORTS--